



End Punctuation

Periods

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| Purpose: | To end declarative sentences, indicate abbreviations, and represent ellipses. |
| Declarative Sentences: | . - Used to mark the end of a statement. Example: The cat sat on the mat. |
| Abbreviations: | . - Used in abbreviations. Example: e.g., i.e., Mr., Dr. |
| Ellipses: | ... - Indicates omitted words or a pause. Example: I was thinking about... what was I saying? |

Question Marks

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| Purpose: | To end interrogative sentences. |
| Interrogative Sentences: | ? - Placed at the end of a direct question. Example: What is your name? |
| Indirect Questions: | Do not use a question mark for indirect questions. Example: I wonder what time it is. |

Exclamation Points

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| Purpose: | To express strong emotion or emphasis. |
| Exclamatory Sentences: | ! - Used to indicate excitement, surprise, or strong emphasis. Example: That's amazing! |
| Overuse: | Avoid overuse, as it can diminish the impact. Example: Instead of: "I can't believe it!!!!" use "I can't believe it!" |

Internal Punctuation

Commas

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| Purpose: | To separate elements in a series, introduce clauses, and set off introductory phrases. |
| Series: | , - Separates items in a list. Use the Oxford comma for clarity. Example: I like apples, bananas, and oranges. |
| Introductory Elements: | , - After introductory words, phrases, or clauses. Example: However, I disagree. After eating, I went for a walk. |
| Coordinate Adjectives: | , - Separate coordinate adjectives that modify the same noun. Example: It was a dark, stormy night. |
| Nonessential Information: | , - Sets off nonessential phrases or clauses. Example: The book, which was very long, was boring. |

Semicolons

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| Purpose: | To connect related independent clauses and separate items in a complex list. |
| Independent Clauses: | ; - Joins related independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction. Example: The sun was shining; the birds were singing. |
| Complex Lists: | ; - Separates items in a list when the items contain commas. Example: I visited Paris, France; Rome, Italy; and London, England. |

Colons

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| Purpose: | To introduce a list, explanation, or example. |
| Lists: | : - Introduces a list of items. Example: I need to buy: milk, bread, and eggs. |
| Explanations: | : - Introduces an explanation or clarification. Example: There's only one thing to do: give up. |
| Emphasis: | : - Adds emphasis to a word or phrase. Example: His goal in life: to be happy. |

Parenthetical Punctuation

Parentheses

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| Purpose: | To enclose supplementary information or explanations. |
| Supplementary Information: | () - Adds extra details that are not essential to the sentence. Example: My dog (a golden retriever) loves to play fetch. |
| Clarifications: | () - Provides clarification or definitions. Example: The acronym NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is well-known. |

Brackets

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| Purpose: | To insert editorial comments or corrections within quotations. |
| Editorial Comments: | [] - Adds clarification or correction in quoted material. Example: "He said he would [definitely] be there." |
| Omissions: | [...] - Indicates omitted text within a quote. Example: "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth [...] a new nation." |

Dashes

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| Purpose: | To indicate a sudden break in thought or to set off parenthetical information. |
| Em Dashes: | <p>— - Used to indicate a break or interruption.</p> <p>Example: I was about to leave—but then the phone rang.</p> |
| En Dashes: | <p>– - Indicates a range or connection between words.</p> <p>Example: Pages 100–200. The New York–London flight.</p> |
| Hyphens: | <p>- - Joins words to form compound adjectives or nouns.</p> <p>Example: A well-known author. A self-made millionaire.</p> |

Quotation Marks and Apostrophes

Quotation Marks

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| Purpose: | To indicate direct speech, quotations, or titles of short works. |
| Direct Speech: | <p>" " - Encloses words spoken by someone.</p> <p>Example: He said, "Hello, world!"</p> |
| Quotations: | <p>" " - Used for quoted material from another source.</p> <p>Example: "To be or not to be, that is the question."</p> |
| Titles of Short Works: | <p>" " - Encloses titles of short stories, poems, articles, and songs.</p> <p>Example: I read the article "The Power of Punctuation."</p> |
| Single Quotation Marks: | <p>' ' - Used for quotations within quotations.</p> <p>Example: He said, "She told me, 'I'm going to the store.'"</p> |

Apostrophes

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| Purpose: | To indicate possession, contractions, or plurals of single letters. |
| Possession: | <p>'s - Indicates ownership.</p> <p>Example: The dog's bone. s' - Indicates plural ownership. The dogs' bones.</p> |
| Contractions: | <p>' - Replaces omitted letters in contractions.</p> <p>Example: I can't. They're. It's.</p> |
| Plurals of Single Letters: | <p>'s - Forms the plural of single letters.</p> <p>Example: Mind your p's and q's.</p> |